

funded, would permit an orderly and cost-effective replacement of cutters, aircraft, and other assets over a period of years. Failure of the executive and legislative branches of government to support and fully fund that plan would cripple the Coast Guard's continued effectiveness—and would cost the American people in numerous ways.

Even today, very few Americans realize how dependent the United States is on the U.S.-flag Merchant Marine for national defense and its continued economic well-being. In times of war or international crises that might lead to war 95 percent or more of the weapons, supplies, and equipment needed by U.S. forces overseas must be carried by ship—usually over thousands of miles of ocean. It would be military folly to rely on foreign-flag shipping to carry that cargo.

Most innovations in the maritime industries in the post-WWII era—e.g., containerization, LASH (lighter aboard ship) vessels, and RO/ROs (roll-on/roll-off ships)—have been of American origin, and the United States is by far the greatest trading nation in the entire world. Literally millions of U.S. jobs, and billions of tax dollars, are generated by the import and export of raw materials and finished products into and out of U.S. ports.

The port infrastructure itself is badly in need of renovation and modernization, however. Because of short-sighted laissez-faire economic policies, U.S.-flag ships today carry only a minor fraction of America's two-way foreign trade. The result is the loss of thousands of seafaring jobs, significantly reduced U.S. sealift capacity, and a Merchant Marine that is now in extremis.

The creation of the Maritime Security Program was a helpful first step toward recovery, but it will take many years, perhaps decades, before the U.S.-flag fleet can regain its traditional title as "the vital Fourth Arm" of national defense.

Additional funding, and a larger force structure, will resolve or at least ameliorate some of the most difficult problems now facing the nation's armed services, not only in procurement and RDT&E (research, development, test, and evaluation) but also in readiness. More and better equipment, combined with a lower operating tempo and higher pay, would in turn have a salutary effect on both recruiting and retention.

There are more intractable problems, though, that all the money in the world will not resolve—and that should be of major concern not only to the nation's armed services and defense decision makers, but to all Americans. The most difficult and most obvious of these problems is the proliferation in recent years of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), and the means to deliver them. There already are a dozen or more nations—several of them extremely hostile to the United States—that already possess (or are close to acquiring) more destructive power than was unleashed by all the armies and navies in the world during World II.

It can be taken for granted that WMDs soon will be available to terrorist groups as well. But what is even more alarming is the near certainty that neither the United States nor the so-called "global community" at large will take the probably draconian steps that would be needed to counter this unprecedented threat. Not, that is, until weapons of mass destruction are actually used by terrorists. The only real question here is not "if," but "when."

There are other dangers, other problems, other defense issues of transcendent importance that must be attended to at the start

of this new century and new millennium. The succession in Russia, for example, in China as well. The mentally unbalanced military adventurism of the leaders of North Korea. The list could go on and on.

Quite possibly the greatest threats to world peace, though, are American complacency and American lethargy. The history of the 20th century shows that, once aroused to action, the American people can and will unite to defeat any enemy, no matter how long it takes or how much it costs. That history also shows, though, that it takes more than education and persuasion to unite the American people. It takes sudden and painful shock.

The problem here is that, in the past, the nation always had time to recuperate from its initial losses, and even from a Pearl Harbor. That may no longer be the case. There is now a bipartisan consensus that the United States should build and deploy a national-mission-defense (NMD) system as soon as "practicable." If that consensus had existed several years ago the need today might not be so urgent. As it is, relatively few Americans realize that the United States is still absolutely vulnerable to enemy missile attacks. Another way of saying it is that not one U.S. missile-defense system has yet been deployed that could shoot down even one incoming enemy missile. That is a sobering thought.

The old axiom says that leadership "begins at the top." But in a democracy that is not entirely true. If the American people demand a certain course of action loud enough and long enough, the elected "leaders" in the executive and legislative branches of government almost always will follow. In the field of national defense the American people have demanded very little in recent years, and, with a few notable exceptions, that is exactly what they have been provided.

In his prescient "Prize Essay" (The Foundation of Naval Policy) in the April 1934 Naval Institute Proceedings Lt. Wilfred J. Holmes argued persuasively that the size of the fleet (and, by implication, the size and composition of all naval/military forces) should always be consistent with national policy. "Failure to adjust the size of navies to the needs of external [i.e., national] policy—or, conversely, to adjust external national policy to the strength of the military fleet—has, in the past, frequently led to disaster," Holmes said. At the 1922 Limitation of Armaments conference, he noted, the United States "relinquished naval primacy in the interests of worldwide limitations of armaments." Unfortunately, though, "the retrenchment in [U.S.] naval strength was not followed by retrenchment in the field of national policy."

The circumstances are not exactly the same today—but they are close enough. The current operating tempo, for all of the nation's armed services, is the highest it has ever been in peacetime. Commitments have been increasing annually, without commensurate increases in funding. Ships, aircraft, and weapon systems are wearing out—and so are our military people. The "gapping" of aircraft carriers in areas of potential crisis is an invitation to disaster—and, therefore, represents culpable negligence on the part of America's defense decision makers.

Eventually, a very high price will have to be paid for these many long years of national lethargy, for the massive underfunding of the nation's armed forces, and for the continued mismatch between commitments and resources. When that time comes—sooner is much more likely than later—it may well be the darkest day in this nation's history.

Is there still time to reverse course? Perhaps. But not much time. And the leadership may well have to come not from those who hold high office in Washington, but from the American people themselves.

If they do provide that leadership, there will indeed be another American century. It will not be another century of violence, but of peace.

Peace on earth, for all mankind. ●

JOHN MCCAIN, AN AMERICAN HERO

● Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to salute my dear friend and colleague, the distinguished Senator from Arizona, JOHN MCCAIN. Although he has suspended his campaign for President, he should nonetheless know that he has scored a great victory in American electoral politics. More so than any other candidate in recent memory, Senator MCCAIN has beaten two of the greatest enemies facing our political system in the twenty-first century—apathy and cynicism. We should all be grateful to him for reminding Americans that "politics" is not a dirty word, that campaigns can be about more than 30 second sound bites, and that heroes still exist. We in the Senate should all feel proud to call him one of our own.

I think I and the four other Vietnam veterans in the Senate feel a particular kinship with Senator MCCAIN, for obvious reasons. You do not go through an experience like combat without being profoundly affected. You recognize a change in yourself when you come home, and you recognize it in others when you meet them for the first time. You are brothers. We are brothers. But why did the rest of America respond to Senator MCCAIN so strongly? Why did the "Straight Talk Express" appear every night on the evening news? Why did so many people want to see Luke Skywalker emerge out of the Death Star?

I believe it is because JOHN MCCAIN reacts to challenges the way we wish we would ourselves, but fear we might not. He remained in the Hanoi Hilton for seven years with his fellow P.O.W.'s even when he could have left. He fights for campaign finance reform, for strong action to reduce youth smoking, and for curbs in pork barrel spending even when he knows it will make him unpopular with his party. He shoots from the hip. He tells reporters how he really feels. He loves his family.

He is not perfect, but none of us are. He and I disagree on many issues, but we agree on this: that the purpose of politics is to generate hope, that serving our country—as a soldier or a sailor or a Senator—is the greatest honor of a person's life, and that, in the words of Babe Ruth, "It's hard to beat a person who won't give up."

Speaking for myself, I am a loyal Democrat who strongly supports the candidacy of AL GORE. But as an American and as a fellow Vietnam veteran, I

am proud of the work JOHN has done, and will no doubt continue to do, in restoring the public's faith in their government and the political process.

Mr. President, JOHN MCCAIN is an authentic American hero, and I am proud to serve along side him.●

HEROES OF THE STORM

● Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, it is with great pride that I come before my colleagues today to pay tribute to the many brave Georgians who pulled together to support one another in the aftermath of the devastating tornadoes that hit Southwest Georgia earlier this month. In the pre-dawn hours of Valentine's day, February 14th, the town of Camilla, Georgia was hit by a series of brutal tornadoes that took the lives of nearly twenty people. This storm caused not only terrible damage—destroying homes, farms and businesses—but it tested the limits of residents across the Southwest portion of the state. It has been said that “Poor is the nation which has no heroes. Poorer still is the nation which has them, but forgets.” When the storm calmed, true heroes emerged and they should be recognized.

I ask that I may be able to insert into the Congressional RECORD a list of individuals, organizations, and area businesses that made all the difference in preparing the people of Mitchell, Grady, Colquitt, and Tift counties for recovery from this tragic event. This list reflects only a portion of the many groups and individuals who reached out to our communities in their time of need. There are others who are often lost in the shuffle, whose movements and actions did not attract the media's spotlight. From the children who donated their own toys, to the families who reached into their savings, to the people who opened their doors for relatives or strangers who needed a place to find refuge.

The people and groups mentioned in this insert are not well known. These are everyday people—everyday Georgians. Individually, they each make a small contribution, collectively they make a tremendous difference.

The list follows:

Governor Roy Barnes and the Georgia Legislature; Law Enforcement officials from Mitchell, Colquitt, Tift, and Grady Counties; Chatam County Emergency Management; Mitchell County Community Response Team; Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce; Calhoun County Public Works; C-E Minerals Inc. in Andersonville; Mitchell County Ministerial Alliance of Camilla; Lions Club; Search and rescue teams from Albany/Dougherty, Macon, Colquitt, and Worth Counties; United States Marine Corps; MCLB Fire and Rescue; Georgia K-9 Rescue Association; University of Georgia Department of Student Affairs; Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA).

Georgia Emergency Management Association (GEMA); U.S. Small Business Administration; Georgia State Highway Patrol;

Georgia Legal Services; Georgia Department of Labor; Georgia Department of Family and Children's Services; American Red Cross; United Way; Salvation Army; Mitchell County Hospital; Phoebe-Putney Hospital; Homebuilders Association of Georgia; Lowes in Albany; Home Depot in Albany; Adventists Disaster Response; Fort Benning Air Force Command Center; Randolph Southern School; Dry Bank Elementary School; USS Maryland SSBN-738 Gold; Dothan Fire Department; Church of Gainesville; Camilla Lawn and Garden; The Mennonites.

Georgia Baptist Convention Relief Organization; United Methodist Church of Centerville and Macon; Emmanuel Baptist Church of James County; Chestnut Grove Baptist Church; Pitts Chapel United Methodist Church of Macon; Plainfield Baptist Church; Turner County Special Services School; United Methodist Mission Volunteers from Tallahassee, Florida, Lee United Methodist Church, Ebenezer UNC, and Macon Methodist Church; Griffin Church; Chapel Wood United Church of Athens; Zion Hill Baptist Church of Atlanta; Antioch Baptist Church of North Atlanta; County Line Church of Macon.

Waukeenah Methodist Church of Cairo; Calvary Baptist Church; First Baptist of Tifton; Beulah Baptist Church of Camilla; First United Methodist Church of Camilla; East Pelham Baptist Church; First Baptist Church of Camilla; First Baptist Church of Eufala, Alabama; Southern Baptist Group of Georgia; Union Baptist Church of Camilla; and First United Methodist Church of Thomasville.●

TRIBUTE TO THE NATIONAL EXCHANGE CLUB'S 89TH ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise today to commend an organization that has given consistently to our communities over the past 89 years. I am proud to honor the National Exchange Club—an organization that can be characterized by the word “service”—as it celebrates the anniversary of its founding.

The National Exchange Club is a volunteer group of men and women dedicated to serving their communities. Founded in 1911 by Charles A. Berkey, the organization has grown from a single group in Detroit, Michigan to nearly 1,000 clubs and 33,000 members throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. In my home state of Minnesota, there are more than 20 clubs committed to making our state and nation a better place to live.

In keeping with its rich history of helping others, the Exchange Club has established Child Abuse Prevention as its national project. By utilizing a wide array of educational programs, local clubs work to create public awareness of child abuse and develop relationships with parents to counter abuse. This program has helped more than 140,000 children since 1979.

Exchange members participate in a variety of other services, such as Youth Programs and Americanism. The Exchange Club's variety of youth programs encourage and recognize students who display good citizenship,

community involvement, and scholastic achievement, and serve as volunteers. Clearly, its efforts are shaping the citizens of the future. Exchange's Americanism efforts spread pride in our nation and work to foster an awareness of the wonderful freedoms with which our country is blessed.

The numerous other community service activities the National Exchange Club undertakes are focused on helping the largest number of citizens as possible in their respective communities. All individuals in a community benefit from the club's crime and fire prevention efforts, its Book of Golden Deeds Award, and the Service to Seniors program.

For 89 years, the volunteers of the National Exchange Club have dedicated themselves to the betterment of our communities. I applaud them on their achievements and wish them a prosperous future.●

TRIBUTE TO MR. THOMAS BRASHER UPON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE U.S. POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE

● Mr. BREAU. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to Thomas D. Brasher, a native of my home state of Louisiana, who will be retiring at month's end after a thirty-five-year career in law enforcement, including thirty years as a postal inspector with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. At the time of his retirement, he will be sixth in seniority among the nation's 2,115 postal inspectors. Although a native of Alexandria, Louisiana, Mr. Brasher has worked with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service in California.

Tom Brasher began his law enforcement career in Lafayette, Louisiana, in 1964, when he joined that city's auxiliary police force while attending the University of Southwestern Louisiana. He became a regular officer in 1965 and worked in patrol. He joined the Louisiana State Police in 1966, where he worked until 1970 when he was recruited by the Postal Inspection Service.

Mr. Brasher's Inspection Service career was in the San Francisco Division, now the Northern California Division. Except for a four-year stint in San Francisco, he worked his entire career in San Jose. Mr. Brasher was primarily involved in investigating external crimes and was the first External Crimes Prevention Specialist for the division. He covered all of seven states and the Pacific Islands in that assignment. He also had assignments in child pornography, embezzlements, and the monitoring of the design and construction of post offices. He also served as an ad-hoc EEO counselor for a four-division area. His last assignments have been on the San Jose External Crimes Team, the San Francisco Bay Area Violent Crimes Team, the Northern